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Speech Opening Australian Federation of Travel Agents Annual Convention, Adelaide

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SPEECH BY THE PREMIER, MR. DUNSTAN, OPENING AUSTRALIAN
FEDERATION OF TRAVEL AGENTS ANNUAL CONVENTION, ADELAIDE. 24.7.72

MR. KING, MR. DRUMBECK, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

THANK YOU FOR INVITING ME TO OPEN YOUR FIFTEENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION. LET ME, FIRST OF ALL, PERSONALLY AND ON BEHALF OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT, EXTEND A VERY WARM WELCOME TO YOUR INTER-STATE DELEGATES. YOU'LL ALREADY KNOW THAT YOU'VE SELECTED THE MOST ATTRACTIVE OF ALL THE AUSTRALIAN CAPITALS AS YOUR VENUE. I'M SURE THAT, BY THE TIME YOU COME TO THE END OF YOUR DISCUSSIONS ON THURSDAY, YOU'LL KNOW TOO THAT YOU'RE IN THE MOST TOURISM-CONSCIOUS STATE IN THE COUNTRY.

MY GOVERNMENT IS FIRMLY COMMITTED TO DEVELOPING OUR TOURIST INDUSTRY.

2.

WE BELIEVE THAT THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY HAS A GREAT FUTURE IN THIS COUNTRY, THAT IT IS CAPABLE OF VERY DRAMATIC GROWTH AND THAT IT'S A JOB AND MONEY SPINNER FOR OUR STATE. AND OUR POLICY IS ALREADY HAVING CONSIDERABLE SUCCESS, FOR INSTANCE (TO CITE JUST ONE EXAMPLE OF MANY) WITH OUR PLANS TO ESTABLISH AN INTERNATIONAL HOTEL IN THE HEART OF ADELAIDE.

SIR, RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY - TOGETHER WITH THE VERY FULL AGENDA THAT YOUR EXECUTIVE HAS PREPARED - MEAN THAT THIS WILL PROBABLY BE YOUR MOST IMPORTANT CONFERENCE YET. I THOUGHT, THEREFORE, IT MIGHT BE OF INTEREST TO YOUR DELEGATES IF I TOUCHED ON MY GOVERNMENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS SOME OF THESE MATTERS.

FIRST, OF COURSE, ARE THE EVENTS OF RECENT DAYS SURROUNDING THE COLLAPSE OF TRAVEL HOUSE OF AUSTRALIA, WHICH HAS HIGHLIGHTED PUBLICLY MOVES TO ESTABLISH A LICENSING SYSTEM FOR TRAVEL AGENTS.

WE IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA ARE NOW PRESSING AHEAD AS FAST AS WE CAN WITH THE PREPARATION OF THIS LEGISLATION FOR INTRODUCTION AT THE PRESENT SESSION OF STATE PARLIAMENT. IT WILL BE AS COMPREHENSIVE AS POSSIBLE. FOR EXAMPLE, WITHOUT GOING INTO DETAILS UNTIL THE FINAL DRAFT IS READY, IT WILL COVER CHARTER BROKERS AND ORGANISERS AS WELL AS TRAVEL AGENTS THEMSELVES.

FRANKLY, I'VE BEEN SOMEWHAT DISAPPOINTED THAT WE HAVEN'T BEEN ABLE TO GET A BILL TO PARLIAMENT BEFORE THIS. BUT IT WAS ONLY AT THE KALGOORLIE TOURISM MINISTERS' CONFERENCE EARLIER THIS MONTH THAT WE WERE ABLE TO REACH AGREEMENT THAT EACH STATE WOULD LEGISLATE SEPARATELY. IT PROVED IMPRACTICAL TO GET THE COMMONWEALTH TO LEGISLATE FOR ALL STATES BECAUSE THEIR BILL, OF COURSE, WOULD HAVE COVERED COMMONWEALTH AND INTERSTATE TRAVEL

BUT NOT - BY REASON OF CONSTITUTIONAL LIMITATIONS - INTRASTATE TOURISM, WHICH WE FELT IT WAS ESSENTIAL TO PROTECT ALSO. ANOTHER PROBLEM WAS IN TRYING TO GET A UNIFORM BILL, AND HERE AGAIN THERE WERE PRACTICAL DIFFICULTIES. ONE WAS THAT SUCH LEGISLATION HAD TO TIE IN WITH VARIOUS EXISTING AGENCY ARRANGEMENTS IN SOME STATES. ANOTHER WAS SOME OF THE SMALLER STATES WOULD FIND DIFFICULTY - BECAUSE OF THEIR SMALL NUMBER OF TRAVEL AGENTS - IN PROVIDING AN EFFECTIVE SYSTEM OF BONDING. A THIRD WAS THAT A FEW OF THE STATES WERE, ACCORDING TO THEIR TOURISM MINISTERS, LIKELY TO BE RELUCTANT TO LEGISLATE FOR A LICENSING SYSTEM. I THINK THE EVENTS OF THE PAST FEW DAYS WILL HAVE CONVINCED THEM OF THE WISDOM OF LEGISLATION AND THE NEED FOR ITS SPEEDY IMPLEMENTATION. WHILE THERE MAY BE SOME DIFFERENCES IN THE VARIOUS BILLS BROUGHT DOWN, I'M SURE, HOWEVER, THAT THEY WILL PROVE TO BE OF A RELATIVELY MINOR NATURE AND THAT THEY CERTAINLY AFFECT RECIPROCITY. IT WILL BE POSSIBLE FOR TRAVEL AGENCIES TO OPERATE UNDER THE VARIOUS STATE LAWS WITHOUT DIFFICULTY.

LESS URGENT BUT OF EQUAL IMPORTANCE TO THE LONG-TERM HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT OF THE TRAVEL INDUSTRY, I BELIEVE, IS THE NEED FOR COMMONWEALTH-SUPPORTED INCENTIVES TO TOURISM. HERE AGAIN, ALTHOUGH WE'VE CONSTANTLY PRESSED THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT ON THIS AND HAVE PRODUCED MASSES OF DOCUMENTED EVIDENCE, THE COMMONWEALTH WON'T BUDGE. THEY'RE PREPARED TO SPEND MANY MILLIONS OF DOLLARS SUPPORTING PRIMARY AND SECONDARY INDUSTRY BUT TOURISM IS LEFT OUT IN THE COLD.

WITH THE EXPLOSIVE POTENTIAL FOR GROWTH THAT TOURISM OFFERS, I THINK THIS IS NOT ONLY SHORTSIGHTED, IT'S DOWNRIGHT ABSURD. IT NEGLECTS THE OBVIOUS BENEFITS THAT TOURISM CAN BRING TO OUR EXPORT EARNINGS AND, MORE HARMFUL STILL, IN A SOCIAL CONTEXT IT IGNORES THE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN AREAS WHERE THEY ARE MOST NEEDED - OFFERED BY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT.

THE STATE GOVERNMENTS AND A.N.T.A. ARE AGREED ON THE NEED FOR A COMMONWEALTH TOURIST DEVELOPMENT FUND WITH POWER TO MAKE GRANTS, PROVIDE LOANS AT LOW INTEREST RATES, OFFER GUARANTEES AND PROVIDE SUPPORT TO LOCAL AND REGIONAL AUTHORITIES. THE CASE FOR FEDERAL ASSISTANCE IS, I BELIEVE, UNANSWERABLE. I HOPE THAT, IN FRAMING THE NEW BUDGET, THE COMMONWEALTH WILL FINALLY REALISE THIS AND GIVE THE TOURISM INDUSTRY THE RECOGNITION AND SUPPORT THAT IS ITS DUE.

SIR, I SAID AT THE START OF THIS ADDRESS THAT YOU WERE IN THE MOST TOURISM-CONSCIOUS OF THE STATES AND SPOKE ABOUT THE PRIORITY MY GOVERNMENT HAS GIVEN TO THIS AREA OF DEVELOPMENT. BUT THE SUCCESS WE'VE BEEN ABLE TO ACHIEVE WOULD NOT HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE ENTHUSIASTIC SUPPORT AND BACKING WE'VE HAD FROM THE A.N.T.A. COUNCIL HERE AND FROM LOCAL GOVERNMENT. THE CARDINAL ASPECT OF OUR POLICY IS A BELIEF IN THE NEED FOR REGIONAL CO-OPERATION.

NO GOVERNMENT, HOWEVER WELL-INTENTIONED AND ACTIVE, CAN HOPE TO STIMULATE TOURISM WITHOUT THE SUPPORT OF THE PEOPLE WHO LIVE IN THE AREAS INVOLVED AND WHO MUST HAVE THE LARGEST SAY WHEN DECISIONS AFFECTING THEIR WAY OF LIFE ARE BEING CONSIDERED.

IN THE LAST EIGHTEEN MONTHS EIGHT REGIONAL TOURIST DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATIONS HAVE BEEN ESTABLISHED BY A.N.T.A. IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA WITH THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE STATE GOVERNMENT. THE ASSOCIATIONS LINK LOCAL GOVERNMENT AUTHORITIES, INDUSTRY, COMMERCE AND COMMUNITY INTERESTS IN WORKING TOGETHER FOR THE ORDERLY DEVELOPMENT OF TOURISM. THEY WILL HAVE AN IMPORTANT VOICE IN HOW TOURISM IN THEIR REGIONS WILL BE DEVELOPED AND WILL PROVIDE THE PERSONAL LINK WHICH IS SO NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS.

ALL ARE AT PRESENT ENGAGED IN VARIOUS ASPECTS OF TOURIST DEVELOPMENT ON MODEST BUDGETS - TO WHICH MY GOVERNMENT WILL CONTRIBUTE - AND I AM CONFIDENT THEY WILL PLAY AN INCREASINGLY IMPORTANT PART IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE INDUSTRY IN SOUTH AUSTRALIA.

A FINE EXAMPLE OF WHAT CAN BE ACHIEVED HERE IS IN THE REPORT PREPARED BY A.N.T.A. - WITH SUPPORT FROM THE STATE GOVERNMENT - ON THE BAROSSA AND RIVERLAND REGIONS.

THIS EXCELLENT, DETAILED STUDY WITH RECOMMENDATIONS BASED ON THE MOST CAREFUL SCRUTINY OF THE EVIDENCE, PROVIDES A BLUEPRINT FOR THE GROWTH OF TOURISM IN WHAT IS POTENTIALLY ONE OF THE MOST POPULAR HOLIDAY AREAS IN AUSTRALIA.

THE REPORT - AND I URGE ANY OF YOU WHO HAVEN'T SEEN IT TO GET HOLD OF A COPY - LAYS DOWN GUIDELINES FOR SOUND AND PRACTICAL DEVELOPMENT WHICH CAN BE IMPLEMENTED BY THE PEOPLE OF THE REGION.

ITS EFFECTS ARE ALREADY APPARENT, AS I HOPE MANY OF YOU WILL HAVE AN OPPORTUNITY TO SEE FOR YOURSELVES IF YOU VISIT THE AREA. THE REPORT IS A MODEL OF ITS KIND AND, WE INTEND, THE FIRST OF A SERIES.

SIR, I HARDLY NEED TO PERSUADE A CONVENTION OF TRAVEL AGENTS OF THE VALUE OF CONVENTIONS TO A TOURIST INDUSTRY. WE BELIEVE THAT ADELAIDE, BECAUSE OF ITS LOCATION AND FACILITIES, ESPECIALLY THE NEW FESTIVAL THEATRE AS PART OF OUR PERFORMING ARTS COMPLEX, CAN GAIN A FAR LARGER SHARE OF THESE THAN IT HAS IN THE PAST. I'M SURE ADELAIDE CAN BECOME THE CONVENTION CENTRE FOR OUR WHOLE REGION. EARLIER THIS YEAR A.N.T.A. PROPOSED THE ESTABLISHMENT HERE OF A CONVENTION BUREAU. MY GOVERNMENT SUPPORTED THIS PROPOSAL IN PRINCIPLE AND SAID WE'D BE HAPPY TO TALK ABOUT IT IN DETAIL IF THERE WAS SUPPORT FOR IT FROM THE PRIVATE SECTOR.

I'M DELIGHTED TO BE ABLE TO ANNOUNCE TODAY THAT A NUMBER OF BUSINESS HOUSES HAVE AGREED TO MEET THE BUREAU'S INITIAL OPERATING EXPENSES AND THAT THE CITY OF ADELAIDE CONVENTION BUREAU, UNDER THE AUSPICES OF A.N.T.A., IS NOW OPEN FOR BUSINESS. I'M TOLD IN FACT THAT THEY'VE ALREADY BEEN IN TOUCH WITH A NUMBER OF ORGANISATIONS ABOUT THEIR FUTURE CONVENTIONS.

SIR, I SEE FROM YOUR AGENDA THAT YOU HAVE A VERY FULL PROGRAMME OVER THE NEXT FEW DAYS. I HOPE IT WON'T PREVENT YOUR DELEGATES FROM ALSO SEEING SOMETHING OF WHAT SOUTH AUSTRALIA CAN OFFER THEM AND THEIR CUSTOMERS, AND IT NOW GIVES ME VERY MUCH PLEASURE OFFICIALLY TO DECLARE YOUR 15TH CONVENTION OPEN.

THANK YOU.